Rs. 38.49 crores during the Ninth Plan period. The project is expected to be completed by 2002.

Publicity to weather forecasts by NCMRWF

619. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item appearing in Hindustan Times of 8th January, 1999 under the caption 'weather bureaucracy lets farmers down', stated that the National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF) knew five days in advance that there would be rains on 6th January, 1999, but this was not given wide publicity and farmers could not be benefited from the knowledge of coming rains; and

(b) if so, the steps Government propose to ensure that such forecasts get wide publicity and farmers and public in general get benefited from such knowledge?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

The user organisation was apprised of the situation by India Meteorological Deptt. in advance and had also issued a general advice on December, 30, 1998 on "Weather During the Week". In this advice, while giving the outlook for the week ending on January, 6, 1999, it was mentioned that prolonged dry spell prevailing over North India is likely to be replaced by a wet weather sequence in the 2nd. half of the week ending January, 6. Therefore, IMD had, in fact, made a forecast about the rainfall for the said period. NCMRWF also makes available its inputs to IMD for validation purposes who, in turn, have been giving weather related information advisories for the farmers.

Taking note of the news item, the Director General, IMD and the Director General, NCMRWF have been advised to further harmonise their working relationship to provide advisories for the use by the farming community promptly.

Prediction of Earthquake by N.G.R.I. Scientists

620. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Questions 1547, given in the Rajya Sabha on the 11th December, 1998 and state:

(a) whether a report on the forecast about the major earthquake in Sone-Narmada-Tapti basin in Central Asia has been obtained from the superannuated scientist of NGRI; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and what further action is proposed to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) and (b) The report on the subject was sought from the superannuated scientist. Some documents have been received, indicating that the studies carried out have been based on host of geophysical parametric studies and the history of occurrences of the earthquakes. Also as per the advice of the superannuated scientist, the Collector, East Nimar, Khandwa (M.P.) had insured 36,180 persons of 23 villages in October 1998. It is for the State Governments to follow up on such forecasts and take appropriate measures.